

**DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS GUIDE
FOR
AUGUSTA, GEORGIA**

Development Document #1
Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia
June 1999

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER II SUMMARY OF REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

Document 2 Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance

Document 3 Land Subdivision Regulations

Document 4 Site Plan Regulations

Document 5 Stormwater Management

Document 6 Stormwater Management Plan Technical Manual

Document 7 Street and Road Design Technical Manual

Document 8 Tree Ordinance

Document 9 Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

Document 10 Soil Erosion/Sediment Control Ordinance

Document 11 Grading Ordinance

Document 12 Groundwater Recharge Area Protection Ordinance

Document 13 Water Supply and Watershed Ordinance

Document 14 Augusta Utilities Department – Design Guidelines

Document 15 Rights-of-Way Encroachment Guidelines

Document 16 Use of County Rights-of Way

CHAPTER III GUIDE TO THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Subdivision Development Plan

Small Subdivision Development Plan

Site Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

Augusta, Georgia regulates the development of land to protect the community from the potential negative impacts of converting land from its natural state to urban land uses. Negative impacts such as poorly constructed streets, water systems and sewers, soil erosion, flooding, and reduction of property value are only a few examples of the health, safety and welfare issues that compel urban governments to carefully regulate land development.

This publication provides a guide to the various regulatory documents that have been adopted by Augusta, Georgia to ensure that the development of land follows acceptable procedures and meets acceptable standards. It provides a summary of each of the ordinances, regulations, technical manuals and other documents and a step-by-step guide to the development review process. A citizen wishing to understand how the development review process works and what protection is offered could obtain that information by reading this publication. An engineer or developer who wants to know exactly what the process is and how each of the various documents would affect a contemplated project would also be well advised to carefully read this document.

The various ordinances, regulations, technical manuals, and other documents that together constitute Augusta's development regulations may be obtained from the Office of the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission, 525 Telfair Street, Augusta, Georgia 30901. Inquiries concerning this material may be made of the Planning Commission at (706)821-1796. The documents may be obtained individually or as a set. A complete set of the documents would consist of the following:

- Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance
- Land Subdivision Regulations
- Site Plan Regulations
- Stormwater Management
- Stormwater Management Plan Technical Manual
- Street and Road Design Technical Manual
- Tree Ordinance
- Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance
- Soil Erosion/Sediment Control Ordinance
- Grading Ordinance
- Groundwater Recharge Area Protection Ordinance
- Water Supply and Watershed Ordinance
- Augusta Utilities Department – Design Guidelines
- Rights-of-Way Encroachment Guidelines
- Use of County Rights-of-Way

II. SUMMARY OF REGULATORY DOCUMENTS

The various ordinances, regulations, technical manuals, and other documents that are summarized in this

publication are all duly adopted under the powers vested in Augusta, Georgia.

Prior to the consolidation of the former City of Augusta and unincorporated Richmond County in 1996 there were separate versions of most of these documents which were subsequently integrated and codified to provide uniformity. Some of the documents represent policies and standards that were first incorporated into written and adopted documents as a result of the efforts of the Subdivision Regulations Review Committee which was very active between 1995 and 1999. Following are summaries of the various documents which collectively regulate the development of land in Augusta, Georgia.

COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE. This document is included in the Augusta-Richmond County Code by reference at § 8-5-1 and it is Document #2 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. The Zoning Ordinance is a document that sets forth the legal uses of land within each of the various districts into which Augusta has been divided. These districts are illustrated on the official Zoning Map which is a companion document. The purpose of the Zoning Ordinance and map is to provide for the separation of land uses that are not harmonious and in doing so implement the Comprehensive Plan and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Generally, land uses are categorized as agricultural, residential, professional, commercial, or industrial. Augusta utilizes a "pyramidal" zoning system, where with some exceptions, land uses permitted in more restrictive zones are also permitted in less restrictive zones. For example, residential land uses are permitted in professional zones, and professional land uses are permitted in commercial zones.

In addition to the various general zoning classifications, the Zoning Ordinance regulates certain specific land uses by requiring a special exception (a.k.a. special use permit) in any zone. Among the land uses that require special exceptions are churches, schools, nursing homes, day care facilities, personal care homes, clubs, hospitals, airports, cemeteries, and landfills. Other land uses that are subject to more specific regulation are manufactured housing, riverfront development, airport clearance, telecommunication facilities, and planned unit developments.

In addition to providing for the separation of land uses by zoning classification and providing for certain specific land uses by special exception, the Zoning Ordinance includes certain basic standards for development. These standards relate to land use, not to design or construction, which is the purpose of the standards in the other regulatory documents. Such standards include the following:

Setback - the minimum distance within which a structure may be constructed from a property line;

Lot coverage - the maximum percentage of the area of a lot that may be occupied by structures;

Parking - the minimum number of parking spaces needed to support a specific land use and the dimensional requirements for that parking;

Lot Size - the minimum area and width of a lot;

Height - the maximum height of a structure;

Signage - the maximum height, size and number of signs permitted.

Augusta has had some form of zoning since the 1930's. In 1963, the first countywide Zoning Ordinance was adopted. Like all of the other regulatory documents the Zoning Ordinance is constantly evolving to adapt to new situations, to address new issues, and to better serve the community goals and Comprehensive Plan. Amendments are made regularly. Generally, map amendments are initiated by a land owner who wants to initiate a use of his land that is not permitted by the current zoning classifications. Applications for map amendments must include a plat of the subject property, prepayment of a fee, and completion of a form at the office of the Planning Commission. Map amendments require the provision of notice per the Official Code of Georgia and the holding of a public hearing by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission makes a recommendation to the Augusta-Richmond County Commission which then makes the ultimate decision on whether or not the zoning map is amended. Decisions of this nature are based on a balancing of the property owner's interest and the public interest, and conformance to the Comprehensive Plan. Map amendments may also be initiated by the Planning Commission to bring the zoning map into conformity with the Comprehensive Plan. Text amendments are almost always initiated by the staff of the Planning Commission to correct deficiencies in the existing text, or to adapt to new conditions. They are also advertised per the Official Code of Georgia, presented at a public hearing before the Planning Commission, and ultimately adopted or rejected by the Augusta Commission.

LAND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS. The Subdivision Regulations are included in the Augusta-Richmond County Code by reference at § 8-3-1 and are Document #3 in the Augusta-Richmond Development Documents set. This document regulates the subdivision of land by providing a process for the approval of plats and by providing general infrastructure construction standards. Detailed construction standards for the various types of improvements that may be needed to construct a subdivision are contained in the various design technical manuals summarized later in this document. A subdivision is defined as the division . . . of a lot, tract or parcel of land into two or more lots, plats, sites, or other divisions of land for the purpose, whether immediate or future, of sale or of building development for purposes other than agricultural. It includes resubdivision and when appropriate to the context, relates to the process of subdividing or to the land or territory subdivided. The City of Augusta first adopted Subdivision Regulations in the 1950's and Unincorporated Richmond County adopted them in 1971. These regulations have evolved as development has changed, problems have emerged, old policies have been re-evaluated, and technology has advanced. They will no doubt continue to evolve as long as Augusta, Georgia conscientiously regulates land development.

The Subdivision Regulations at 104.1 prohibit the creation or sale of lots per the definition of a subdivision copied above within Augusta, Georgia unless such lots conform to all requirements of these regulations and have been approved by the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission. These

regulations are without regard to land use, be it agricultural, residential, commercial or other.

At 104.3 an abbreviated process is provided for whereby tracts may be subdivided into ten lots or less without going through the typical two step process. A conceptual plan (when applicable) may be permitted to substitute for the Development Plan prescribed at 201 by the Executive Director. The conceptual plan requires administrative approval of all respective departments but it does not have to be approved by the Planning Commission. This abbreviated process allows small subdivisions to advance quickly when there is no apparent public impact.

The first step in the process of getting a typical subdivision approved is found at 201, where the Subdivision Regulations require the submission of an overall development plan (except where exempted under 104.3). The development plan is a civil engineering document illustrating how the improvements that would be required would conform to the regulations. The Subdivision Regulations do not include detailed design guidelines and construction standards. They are found in other documents summarized in this report. The various elements of the plan are generally presented on separate sheets which are attached to a cover sheet and collectively constitute the development plan. The development plan must be stamped and signed by a professional engineer or architect, certifying that it conforms to all rules, regulations, and standards of civil engineering. Required at submission are forms, sets of plans, and a fee.

Upon submission to the staff of the Planning Commission by a professional engineer or architect, the development plan is routed through all of the various review departments and agencies. Upon completion of their independent review, reports are submitted back to the Planning Commission staff. If revisions are needed to satisfy any reviewer, then the engineer or architect makes those revisions and resubmits them to the Planning Commission. After all departments and agencies have approved the development plan, it is placed on the agenda of the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission for their consideration (see 201.G of the Subdivision Regulations for administrative approval in certain situations). There is no public advertisement process. Upon approval by the Planning Commission, the development plan is stamped approved. This permits the developer to begin constructing the improvements according to the plan. Inspections are conducted periodically during construction by the Department of Public Works.

At 202 the Subdivision Regulations provide for a final plat of a subdivision to be submitted by a registered land surveyor to the Planning Commission upon the completion of the construction of improvements per the development plan. Platting of the land covered by the overall development plan may be done in sections and improvements may be installed in sections with certain exceptions. Maintenance agreements and deeds of dedication for streets and other public improvements are submitted along with the final plat, which is circulated for review by the various departments and agencies. When all approvals have been received by the Planning Commission staff, the final plat is placed on the agenda of the Planning Commission. Upon approval of the Planning Commission, the final plat is forwarded to the next meeting of the Augusta-Richmond County Commission for consideration. After the final plat has been approved by the Augusta-Richmond County Commission, signed by the Mayor, and recorded by the Clerk of the Court, the subdivision review process is completed and the developer is able to sell lots and construction of buildings may begin.

SITE PLAN REGULATIONS. The Site Plan Regulations are included in the Augusta-Richmond County Code by reference at § 8-8-1 and it is Document #4 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. A site plan is an accurately scaled development plan that illustrates the existing conditions on a land parcel as well as the details of a proposed development. A site plan is required at Section 30-2 of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance prior to issuance of a building permit by Augusta for constructing or expanding any structure that is not a single family house or related thereto. The Site Plan Regulations is a document that sets forth how Section 30-2 shall be conformed to. Although site plans have been required pursuant to Section 30-2 since at least 1963, the subject document was drafted and adopted in 1998 as part of the activity of the Subdivision Regulations review committee. Prior to that there were the "Site Plan Check List", internal policies, and a reliance on standards found in the Subdivision Regulations to serve the purpose that this document shall serve henceforth.

Article I of the Site Plan Regulations sets forth the legislative authority, purpose, and scope of the document. At 106, it exempts certain minor development projects from some or all provisions of the Regulations at the discretion of the Executive Director of the Planning Commission.

Article II sets forth the procedures for getting a site plan approved. At 2.02 the details of the submission are given. Generally, an application form, 14 sets of plans drawn and certified by an architect or civil engineer, and payment of a fee are required. Upon submission to the staff of the Planning Commission, a site plan is routed through all of the various review departments and agencies. Upon completion of their independent reviews, reports are submitted back to the Planning Commission staff. If revisions are needed to satisfy any reviewer, then the engineer or architect makes those revisions and then resubmits them to the Planning Commission staff for their consideration. There is no public advertisement process. Upon approval of the Planning Commission staff, the site plan is stamped approved, allowing construction to begin. The action of the staff is confirmed by the Planning Commission at their next meeting. Inspections are conducted periodically during construction by the Department of Public Works and others.

Article III describes the format for site plans, and lists the information that must be included. This article does not include design guidelines but it references the other documents where they are provided. Article IV provides for variances (on a hardship basis), penalties, and amendments.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT. This document is included in the Augusta-Richmond County Code at § 5-1-1 and it is Document #5 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. This document provides minimum requirements regarding stormwater management necessary to construct public/private facilities in Augusta. This document establishes minimum requirements for the design and construction of individual and collective stormwater management systems.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN TECHNICAL MANUAL. This document is referenced in the Augusta-Richmond County Code at § 5-6-1 and it is Document #6 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. This document establishes minimum requirements for the design and

construction of individual and collective stormwater management systems. It is written to provide engineers, developers, land planners, and others with the technical information necessary to design and construct stormwater management systems that minimize the increase in volume and intensity of stormwater due to development activity. This is necessary to protect adjacent property owners, public infrastructure, and waterways when land is developed.

A stormwater management plan is a required element of a site plan or a subdivision development plan per the Site Plan Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations. Stormwater management plans are submitted by a civil engineer to the Planning Commission as part of site plans and subdivision development plans. They are forwarded to the Department of Public Works for review to assure that the standards set forth in the Technical Manual are adhered to. When approved by Public Works, they are returned to the Planning Commission as approved or with discrepancies noted. When the site plan or subdivision development plan has been stamped approved by the Planning Commission staff, the construction of the stormwater management system may begin.

There are five parts of the Technical Manual. Part I provides a method for determining runoff from a site, minimum design criteria for storm drain systems, inlets, open channels, culverts, detention facilities, and outfall structures, outfall release rates, and special restrictions that have been enacted due to existing problems in the Raes Creek, Rocky Creek, and Rock Creek basins. Part II enumerates various environmental regulations. Part III provides detailed guidance on the materials to be used in constructing stormwater facilities. Part IV provides standards for soil erosion and sediment control during construction. Part V provides for maintenance of stormwater systems after construction.

STREET AND ROAD DESIGN TECHNICAL MANUAL. This document is referenced in the Augusta-Richmond County Code at § 7-3-60 and it is Document #7 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. It establishes minimum requirements for the design and construction of streets, roads, and appurtenant structures. It is written to provide engineers, developers, land planners, and others with the technical information necessary to design and construct streets and roads within subdivisions and in some cases within individual commercial or industrial sites.

There are three parts of this document. Part I provides the minimum street and roadway design criteria that are acceptable. It provides general standards for the classification of streets, right-of-way and layout requirements and standards for each type street. It also provides design standards for embankments, pavement, storm drains, sidewalks, deceleration lanes, and driveways. Part II of the document is a short section dealing with environmental requirements. Part III details the acceptable construction materials for storm drains, culverts, roadways, bridges, drainage structures, and earth work.

TREE ORDINANCE. This document is included in the Augusta-Richmond County Code at § 8-4-1 and it is Document #8 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. The Tree Ordinance provides standards for the protection of public trees, designates landmark trees, and provides landscaping standards for the development of private property. Under the latter, single family residential development is exempted from consideration.

For development, for which a site plan is required, a Greenspace Plan is required at § 8-4-11(c). This plan must include a landscape element, a tree protection element, and a tree establishment element. The Greenspace Plan must illustrate conformity to the various provisions of the Tree Ordinance, which are essentially minimum standards for the following:

- percent of site to be landscaped
- protection of retained and planted trees
- provision of greenspace adjacent to streets
- provision of greenspace in parking lots
- buffers between conflicting land uses
- provision of retained or planted trees to attain "tree quality points"

A Greenspace Plan is generally submitted as a sheet attached to a site plan. The Greenspace Plan is reviewed by the staff of the Planning Commission along with the rest of the site plan and it is subject to administrative approval by the staff. At their bi-monthly meeting, the Augusta Tree Commission reviews the Greenspace Plans that have been approved during the previous period. Their comments are used by the staff to improve the application of the Ordinance to future projects. The Augusta Tree Commission also initiates amendments to the Tree Ordinance. These amendments must be approved by the Augusta-Richmond County Commission in order to be added to the Ordinance. Attached to the Tree Ordinance is the Tree Ordinance Illustrated Guide, which gives technical specifications for developing greenspace plans and other purposes.

FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE. This Ordinance is included in the Augusta-Richmond County Code at § 8-1-1 and it is Document #9 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. Its purpose is to provide regulations for land development and construction in flood prone areas. The Ordinance is accompanied by a series of maps that delineate the areas susceptible to creek overflow flooding during the 100 year and 500 year design floods. The maps are based on survey data and a computer modeling process conducted by the US Army Corps of Engineers on behalf of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The maps are the basis for determining which areas are regulated, what development can occur on a specific lot or tract, and what protective or remedial measure should be taken to support development of a lot or tract. The Ordinance and maps are administered by the Planning Commission staff.

The Ordinance requires anyone who would construct a structure, grade, fill or develop in a flood prone area (per the maps) to obtain a flood permit before initiating any construction or land disturbance. The application for the permit requires the applicant to disclose the existing topography of the site and also the proposed structures, grading, drainage facilities, and contours. This information is reviewed by the staff of the Planning Commission to determine whether the proposal conforms to the Ordinance. If it does, then the permit is granted administratively. A permit under this Ordinance may or may not be obtained as part of a site plan or subdivision development plan depending upon the nature of the project. Upon completion of construction, an Elevation Certificate must be filed for each building by a registered land surveyor or professional engineer that the elevation of the lowest finished floor is no lower than

required by the Ordinance before a certificate of occupancy is approved by the License and Inspection Department.

The standards essentially prohibit any form of encroachment in the floodway, which is the most critical central area of a designated floodplain. The floodway is defined by a distance from the centerline of each creek calculated by the computer models. The remainder of the floodplain, identified as the floodway fringe, is divided into two sections. The lower half of the floodway fringe is restricted from encroachment in most circumstances. The upper half of the floodway fringe may be encroached upon so long as the lowest finished floor of each building is one or two feet above the 100 year design flood depending on where within Augusta a property is located. Non-residential structures may be "flood proofed" below the flood elevation in lieu of elevation.

The Ordinance is amended periodically to conform to new Federal regulations, to correct deficiencies, and to address new issues. The maps may be revised by FEMA if substantial modification to a drainage basin or a waterway occurs. Map amendments may be granted on specific sites on the basis of engineering data supplied by a property owner which supports the amendment, upon approval of FEMA. Variances to this Ordinance may be considered by the Board of Zoning Appeals, but they are rarely granted due to the Federal regulations.

SOIL EROSION/SEDIMENTATION CONTROL ORDINANCE. This document is included in the Augusta-Richmond County Code at § 7-3-31 and it is Document #10 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. The Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance provides minimum guidelines for measures and practices as applied to development, including street and utility installations, drainage facilities and other temporary and permanent improvements. Appropriate measures per Best Management Practices as set forth in Section 7-3-34(b) and (c) of this Ordinance shall be installed to prevent or control erosion and sedimentation pollution during all stages of any land-disturbing activity.

§ 7-3-33 clearly outlines projects that are exempt from the provisions of the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance. Any non-exempt project must submit a SESC Plan with supporting documentation to the Planning Commission staff who in turn will submit said plan to the County Engineer and the District Soil Conservation office for review and approval. A grading permit will not be issued until such time as a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan has been approved.

GRADING ORDINANCE. This document is included in the Augusta-Richmond County § 7-3-40 et seq. and it is Document #11 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. The original Grading Ordinance was adopted in 1986. The Grading Ordinance provides rules and regulations for excavation, filling, and grading activities, and for administration and enforcement of said rules and regulations. Grading Plans and Permits are required for all excavation, filling, and grading activities except for those specifically exempted in § 7-3-42 of the Ordinance. For site activity involving land disturbances greater than 1.1 acres, a Soil Erosion Sediment Control Plan is required, and the Grading Plan would be a part of the Soil Erosion Plan, although a separate Grading Permit would still be required prior to construction. Where construction of a single family home is about to commence, an individual

plot plan pursuant to the Soil Erosion Ordinance would be provided and reviewed. Where grading activities are to be initiated related to the eventual, but not imminent construction of single family homes, a grading plan is required by one of two processes. In subdivisions, where there is an approved Soil Erosion Plan/Grading Plan it is a phone-in procedure. In all other cases, a Grading Plan must be submitted and a Grading Permit obtained.

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREA PROTECTION ORDINANCE. This Ordinance, codified as § 8-6-1, et seq., was adopted in 1998 to conform to Part V of the Comprehensive Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is Document #12 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. The purpose of the Ordinance is to manage land use within Groundwater Recharge Areas to ensure that the threat of pollution of groundwater is minimized. The Ordinance sets standards for protection of groundwater which apply to waste disposal facilities, agricultural impoundments, hazardous material handling facilities, waste water basins, stormwater basins, wastewater spray and sludge operations, and homes or other land uses served by septic tank/drain systems. Under the Ordinance, minimum lot sizes within the recharge areas where septic tanks are utilized are determined by considering pollution susceptibility, soil group, and slope. Minimum lot sizes within the recharge areas where septic tanks are proposed are considerably larger than would be required if public sewerage was available.

WATER SUPPLY AND WATERSHED PROTECTION ORDINANCE. This Ordinance, codified as § 8-7-1, et seq., was adopted in 1998 to conform to Part V of the Comprehensive Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is Document #13 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. The purpose of the Ordinance is to regulate land-disturbing activities associated with development that threatens the storage capacity of reservoirs and pollutes surface water resources. The Ordinance designates a district, which is located above the City's raw water intake on the Augusta Canal, and limits the development of new hazardous materials handling facilities within the district.

AUGUSTA UTILITIES DEPARTMENT DESIGN STANDARDS. This is a technical manual that is included in the Augusta Richmond County Code at § 7-3-90. It is Document #14 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. Section 13A provides design and construction standards for potable water distribution systems, including fire hydrants and fire lines. Section 13B provides design and construction standards for sanitary sewer systems.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY ENCROACHMENT GUIDELINES. This document provides guidelines for encroachments within public rights-of-way by utility providers. It is Document #15 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. This document sets forth administrative procedures for obtaining permits and conducting work within utility facility encroachments on rights-of-way, outlines notification requirements, provides utility construction guidelines, defines warranty periods and establishes penalties for non-compliance.

USE OF COUNTY RIGHTS-OF WAYS. This is an Ordinance that regulates the encroachment on or use of County rights-of-way. It is codified as § 7-3-26 et seq. and it is Document #16 in the Augusta-Richmond County Development Documents set. This document provides general guidelines for

encroachments within public rights-of-way and outlines penalties for violations described within the document. It is being revised slightly with the addition of a reference to Document #15: Rights-of-Way Encroachment Guidelines.

III. GUIDE TO THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

The purpose of this section is to illustrate how the various documents summarized in the previous section would be used to design and review development projects, and thus give the reader an understanding of how the development review process actually works. In addition to the application of the various documents, this section addresses internal procedures for carrying out the review. These procedures are generally not prescribed by law and are subject to change.

SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT PLAN. The development of a subdivision, whether residential, professional, commercial, or industrial, begins after a tract of land has been selected and the owner, developer, or an agent of either selects a civil engineer to produce plans for the development. The engineer may then proceed to produce the necessary plans, or he may request a meeting with the staff of the Planning Commission or produce a preliminary concept plan for review by the staff. The latter two alternatives are often beneficial if the land or the concept of development poses an unusual situation that might lead to conflicts in interpretation of regulations later on in the process.

In producing a development plan for the property, the engineer reviews each of the documents summarized in this guide to determine their application. The Zoning Ordinance and map are consulted to determine whether the proposed land use is acceptable, as well as the minimum lot width and lot size. Flood maps are consulted to determine whether there are floodplains, and if they are present, they are mapped on the plat and the regulatory issues are determined from the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Water and sewer systems, roadway systems and stormwater management systems are then designed by referring to the various technical documents summarized in this guide. A soil erosion plan is developed by applying the standards of the Soil Erosion Ordinance. When the Development Plan has been completed by the engineer, he stamps and signs it, various assurances are signed by the owner and the project architect or engineer, and twelve sets + three cover sheets are presented to the staff of the Planning Commission accompanied by a fee and an application.

The staff then reviews the application package to assure that it is reasonably complete. The plan is sent to the various departments and agencies to review, and subsequently they approve or reject the plan as to conformance with the technical specifications within their area of responsibility. The review is reported on a form signed by the reviewer, and returned to the Planning Commission staff. When all forms have been returned, then the architect or engineer is notified of the result. If any of the reviewers has failed to approve the plans, then the reason for the rejections must be resolved. After revisions are made on the plan and it is resubmitted to the Planning Commission staff, the revisions are sent back to the reviewer who disapproved the plan and that review starts over.

When all departments and agencies have approved the plan, then the engineer is notified and the

development plan is placed on the next Planning Commission agenda for approval. If the approval process is completed several weeks prior to the next meeting, then staff is authorized to grant administrative approval for a development plan which is subsequently reported to the Planning Commission at their next meeting. Figure 1 is a diagram of the process which applies to Subdivision Development Plats and Site Plans.

Upon approval of the development plan, the construction of the improvements shown on the plan may begin. This construction is inspected by the Department of Public Works, the License and Inspection Department, the Utilities Department, the Board of Health, and others. When the construction nears completion, the architect or engineer obtains the services of a registered land surveyor to produce the final plat, which is a legal document illustrating the boundaries of each lot to be created.

Eight copies of the final plat are then submitted to the staff of the Planning Commission and they forward these copies to the review departments and agencies. When all approvals are received and signed copies of all easements and dedications have been provided, then the final plat is placed on the next Planning Commission agenda. If the necessary information is received at such time that waiting for the next Planning Commission meeting would result in missing an agenda for the Augusta-Richmond County Commission, then the final plat is approved administratively and placed on the agenda of the Augusta-Richmond County Commission. If administrative approval by the staff is granted, then it is reported to the Planning Commission at their next meeting. The normal approval process would be for the Planning Commission and then the Augusta-Richmond County Commission to approve the final plat.

SMALL SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT PLAN. If a landowner or developer wishes to develop a subdivision that meets standards set at Section 104.3 of the Subdivision Regulations, then an abbreviated review process may be utilized at the discretion of the Executive Director. Subdivisions that may utilize the abbreviated process are those which would create 16 lots or less, provide for no new streets, and have enough frontage on a dedicated street so that each lot may have the necessary frontage on that street. The abbreviated process is identical to the full review process, except in the areas that are noted in the remainder of this section.

The initial design phase for a small subdivision with no new streets is a concept plan which may be accepted by the Executive Director in lieu of a full development plan. The concept plan shows all the subject property, all contiguous property which may be subdivided within the subsequent ten year period, and also adjoining properties that the owner or developer has a financial interest in. The concept plan shows the proposed lot layout, soils, topography, and all soil erosion and stormwater improvements that are proposed to conform to the various ordinances. The Executive Director may require whatever additional information he feels essential due to the characteristics of the site and location. Such information may include driveway locations, water and/or sewer service, improvements within the street right-of-way, offsite stormwater, stormwater easements and/or outfalls, and other data needed to ensure that the spirit and intent of the Subdivision Regulations would be met. The concept plan is submitted to the Planning Commission staff and they circulate it among the review agencies and departments just like a development plan. When all approvals have been received, the Planning Commission staff approves the concept plan. It is not submitted to the Planning Commission nor the Augusta-Richmond County

Commission.

After the concept plan has been approved, the developer or owner constructs the improvements as shown. If the plan includes flagpole lots that require paved common driveways then those driveways must be constructed and inspected before any lots are sold. After the improvements have been constructed, then plats showing ten lots or less may be prepared by a registered land surveyor and submitted to the Executive Director for administrative approval. After that approval has been granted, and the plat is signed and recorded, the sale of lots may begin.

SITE PLAN. Like a subdivision project, the development of a multiple family residential, professional, commercial, or industrial site begins after a tract has been selected and a civil engineer has begun to produce plans for the development. A sketch plan or a conference with the staff of the Planning Commission may be held before the production of the site plan actually begins.

The engineer produces the plan by conceptualizing the project that is proposed for the site, taking into account engineering practices and the standards set in the various regulatory documents summarized in Section II of the guide. The Zoning Ordinance is consulted to assure that the proposed use is permitted in the zoning district where the property is located. Standards for parking, setbacks, density, building height, and signage are also found in the Zoning Ordinance. The Flood Ordinance is consulted to determine whether there are floodplains and if there are what measures must be taken to protect the proposed improvements from flooding. Water and sewer systems, roadway systems, and stormwater management systems are designed by referring to the various technical materials summarized in this guide. Landscape and grading plans are prepared to conform to those respective ordinances. When all of these plans have been completed, they are consolidated into one site plan, which is stamped and signed by the architect/engineer. Twelve copies are presented to the staff of the Planning Commission accompanied by a fee and an application.

The staff then reviews the application package to assure that it is reasonably complete. The plan is sent to the various departments and agencies to review, and subsequently they approve or reject the plan as to conformance with the technical specifications within their area of responsibility. The review is reported on a form signed by the reviewer, and returned to the Planning Commission staff. When all forms have been returned, then the architect or engineer is notified of the result. If any of the reviewers failed to approve the plans, then the reason for the rejections must be resolved. After revisions are made on the plan and it is resubmitted to the staff, the revisions are sent back to the reviewer who disapproved the plan and that review starts over.

When all departments and agencies have approved the plan, it is formally approved by the staff of the Planning Commission and two signed copies along with a Grading permit are returned to the architect/engineer, and construction may begin.